



**UNIVERSITIES  
SOUTH AFRICA**

## **CoPAL REPORT ON LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES**

### **UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA**

**DATE:** 13 March 2025

**UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES REPORTING:** Ms. Busile C. Ndhlovu and Mr. William Jiyana

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### **1. TEACHING & LEARNING MATTERS**

The University of Mpumalanga (UMP) conducted two workshops on teaching, learning, and assessment in higher education. These interactive events focused on enhancing teaching practices and capacitating staff members with the necessary principles to align with UMP's core values: excellence, collaboration, adaptability, and innovation. Key areas covered included:

- The teaching and learning policy
- Graduate Attributes
- Holistic student development
- Supporting the learning environment

Additionally, IT Specialist Ms. Sinazo Matjila facilitated six workshops aimed at integrating technology into teaching and learning. These workshops covered topics such as:

- AI Literacy
- Padlets
- Polling tools
- ChatGPT
- Claudia and other IT tools

UMP continues to offer a blended learning approach, with both online and face-to-face teaching. Double lectures are conducted using student-centered methods to enhance engagement.

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## **2. TERMINOLOGY DEVELOPMENT & GLOSSARIES**

The Language Policy Task Team has developed a terminology list extracted from one of the Culture and Heritage Studies modules. These terms have been translated into IsiNdebele and Siswati. The next terminology list will be based on the Research Methodology module.

This is an ongoing commitment which indicates that the UMP is dedicated to fully implementing its own language policy and improving language diversity within the institution.

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## **3. LANGUAGE POLICY MATTERS**

The UMP Language Policy Task Team has successfully developed a language policy, which has been approved by the Management Committee (MANCO). The next steps include:

- Conducting internal workshops to capacitate staff members
- Consulting internally with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's office and Deans
- Proceeding with external consultations after internal processes are complete

### **Creative Writing Project**

The Language Team, in collaboration with the Culture and Heritage Department, has initiated a creative writing project. This initiative aims to empower students to write poetry and short stories in their native languages, fostering linguistic creativity and preservation.

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## **4. RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

### **Research Centre for African Languages**

The University of Mpumalanga in partnership with the provincial Department of, Sports, Culture, and Recreation recently held a meeting to discuss the revitalizing of the Research Centre for African Languages, focusing on Siswati and IsiNdebele. The objective is to encourage research publications in these languages, as research is already conducted in Siswati and IsiNdebele at the Master's and Honours levels.

### **Postgraduate Enrollments in Siswati and IsiNdebele**

#### **Siswati:**

- 2024: 5 master's students
- 2025: 3 master's students
- 2024: 5 Honours students
- 2025: 7 Honours students

#### **IsiNdebele:**

- 2024: 3 Honours students
- 2025: 3 Honours students

Teaching and research for these students are conducted in both Siswati and IsiNdebele.

### **Communicative Development Inventory (CDI)**

This project is collaborative research between Stellenbosch University, University of KwaZulu-Natal, North-West University, University of Limpopo, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, UNISA, University of Mpumalanga, University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town, as well as ECD centres and NGOs. We are funded from a range of sources, including the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR) supported by the Department of Science and Innovation, the National Research Foundation (NRF), the Newton Fund, and Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT)

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## **5. LANGUAGE EVENTS HOSTED & ORGANISED**

### **Siswati Language Workshop**

UMP collaborated with Ligwalagwala FM, a Siswati-language radio station, to host a workshop on Siswati language rules. The event featured contributions from two Siswati Silulu Dictionary Unit members and an orientation session on the PanSALB document for Siswati language standardization. This collaboration is ongoing.

### **SADiLaR, PANSALB and WIKIPEDIA Workshop**

A SADiLaR workshop is scheduled for the 24th and 25th of March 2025. It will provide students and lecturers with training in writing research articles in Siswati and IsiNdebele.

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## **6. LANGUAGE-RELATED PROJECTS**

### **Language Policy Internal Workshop for Academic Staff**

The university has planned internal workshops to train academic staff in implementing the new language policy.

### **Upcoming Partnerships**

UMP is actively pursuing partnerships with:

- ACALAN (African Academy of Languages)
- PanSALB (Pan South African Language Board)

### **Collaboration with the Department of Arts, Culture, and Recreation**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2025, a meeting was held between the Department of Arts, Culture, and Recreation, the Department of Education, and UMP to discuss reviving the Language Research Centre in Mpumalanga Province. The meeting highlighted that

previous research centres were piloted under former Minister of Higher Education Mr. Kadar Asmal.

Key resolutions from the meeting:

- The Department of Arts, Culture, and Recreation (DCSR) will investigate findings from the original pilot project.
- Fully functional Language Research Centres should be attached to universities.
- A formal meeting between UMP and the DCSR will be arranged to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- University and departmental management teams will be briefed on the matter to ensure seamless collaboration.

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This report highlights UMP's ongoing commitment to enhancing teaching and learning, promoting indigenous languages, and fostering research excellence in Siswati and IsiNdebele. Continued collaborations and strategic partnerships will further contribute to the university's mission of academic excellence and language development.